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MID-ATLANTIC INFORMATION OFFICE: Philadelphia, Pa.

Technical information: (215) 597-3282 BLSInfoPhiladelphia@bls.gov www.bls.gov/regions/mid-atlantic

Media contact: (215) 861-5600 BLSMediaPhiladelphia@bls.gov

Consumer Price Index, Baltimore-Columbia-Towson – April 2019

Area prices up 1.7 percent since February; up 2.6 percent over the year

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Baltimore-Columbia-Towson increased 1.7 percent from February to April, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Regional Commissioner Sheila Watkins noted that the recent two-month increase was due largely to a 1.1-percent rise in the all items less food and energy index. The energy index and food index also increased since February, up 10.6 and 0.4 percent, respectively. (Data in this report are not seasonally adjusted. Accordingly, month-to-month changes may reflect the impact of seasonal influences.)

Over the last 12 months, the CPI-U increased 2.6 percent. The over-the-year rise was due almost entirely to an increase in the all items less food and energy index (2.9 percent). The food index also rose over the year, up 2.3 percent, while prices for energy decreased, down 0.2 percent. (See [table 1](#).)

Food

The food index increased 0.4 percent over the last two months. Prices rose for food away from home, up 2.3 percent, while prices were lower for food at home, down 1.2 percent. Within the food at home component, prices were lower for various items including tomatoes, while prices were higher for items including snacks and milk, among others.

Over the year, the food index increased 2.3 percent. Prices rose for food away from home (5.3 percent), while they edged down for food at home (-0.2 percent).

Energy

The energy index, which includes prices for household and transportation fuels, increased 10.6 percent, due almost entirely to a 21.2-percent rise in gasoline prices since February, the largest two month increase in this index in eight years. Prices were also higher over the last two months for electricity, up 1.6 percent, while those for utility (piped) gas service decreased 4.1 percent.

Over the year, the energy index declined 0.2 percent. Prices were lower for gasoline (-0.3 percent) and utility (piped) gas service (-5.0 percent) since April 2018, while those for electricity increased 0.6 percent.

All items less food and energy

The index for all items less food and energy increased 1.1 percent from February to April. Higher prices for medical care (7.5 percent) and recreation (2.8 percent) were moderated by lower prices for apparel (-6.8 percent), among others.

The index for all items less food and energy increased 2.9 percent since April 2018, led by higher prices for medical care, up 12.9 percent, the largest over-the-year increase for this index. Prices also rose over the year for shelter (2.6 percent), but were lower for apparel (-8.7 percent).

The Consumer Price Index for June 2019 is scheduled to be released Thursday, July 11, 2019 at 8:30 am (ET).

Technical Note

The Consumer Price Index for Baltimore-Columbia-Towson is published bi-monthly. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a measure of the average change in prices over time in a fixed market basket of goods and services. The Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes CPIs for two population groups: (1) a CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) which covers approximately 93 percent of the total population and (2) a CPI for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) which covers approximately 29 percent of the total population. The CPI-U includes, in addition to wage earners and clerical workers, groups such as professional, managerial, and technical workers, the self-employed, short-term workers, the unemployed, and retirees and others not in the labor force.

The CPI is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, and fuels, transportation fares, charges for doctors' and dentists' services, drugs, and the other goods and services that people buy for day-to-day living. Each month, prices are collected in 75 urban areas across the country from about 5,000 housing units and approximately 22,000 retail establishments--department stores, supermarkets, hospitals, filling stations, and other types of stores and service establishments. All taxes directly associated with the purchase and use of items are included in the index.











































The index measures price changes from a designated reference date (1982-84) that equals 100.0. An increase of 16.5 percent, for example, is shown as 116.5. This change can also be expressed in dollars as follows: the price of a base period "market basket" of goods and services in the CPI has risen from \$10 in 1982-84 to \$11.65. For further details see the CPI home page on the Internet at www.bls.gov/cpi and the BLS Handbook of Methods, Chapter 17, The Consumer Price Index, available on the Internet at www.bls.gov/opub/hom/pdf/homch17.pdf.

In calculating the index, price changes for the various items in each location are averaged together with weights that represent their importance in the spending of the appropriate population group. Local data are then combined to obtain a U.S. city average. Because the sample size of a local area is smaller, the local area index is subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. In addition, local indexes are not adjusted for seasonal influences. As a result, local area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. **Note: Area indexes do not measure differences in the level of prices between cities; they only measure the average change in prices for each area since the base period.**

The **Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD, Core Based Statistical Area** includes Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Baltimore City, Carroll, Harford, Howard, and Queen Anne's Counties in Maryland.














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Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted)

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Feb. 2019	Mar. 2019	Apr. 2019	Apr. 2018	Feb. 2019	Mar. 2019
All items.....		254.433		258.816	2.6	1.7	
Food and beverages		262.572		263.698	2.5	0.4	
Food		262.149		263.166	2.3	0.4	
Food at home		236.383	235.362	233.468	-0.2	-1.2	-0.8
Cereals and bakery products		293.843		289.296	-1.0	-1.5	
Meats, poultry, fish, and eggs.....		226.106		224.266	-2.3	-0.8	
Dairy and related products		233.095		229.537	-0.1	-1.5	
Fruits and vegetables		288.740		288.342	3.3	-0.1	
Nonalcoholic beverages and beverage materials(1)		181.643		176.082	-0.4	-3.1	
Other food at home		210.725		208.123	-0.5	-1.2	
Food away from home.....		299.884		306.673	5.3	2.3	
Alcoholic beverages		265.813		268.291	4.9	0.9	
Housing(1).....		260.455		261.553	2.4	0.4	
Shelter		307.214	308.700	308.113	2.6	0.3	-0.2
Rent of primary residence		361.731	361.637	361.364	4.0	-0.1	-0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of residences(2).....		320.084	321.021	321.188	2.6	0.3	0.1
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence(2)		320.084	321.021	321.188	2.6	0.3	0.1
Fuels and utilities.....		232.675		234.621	0.4	0.8	
Household energy		204.914	204.445	206.744	-0.2	0.9	1.1
Energy services.....		219.240	218.579	221.682	0.0	1.1	1.4
Electricity		207.139	207.050	210.553	0.6	1.6	1.7
Utility (piped) gas service		182.613	177.475	175.172	-5.0	-4.1	-1.3
Household furnishings and operations.....		120.272		121.764	2.1	1.2	
Apparel		131.439		122.489	-8.7	-6.8	
Transportation		196.540		206.958	0.0	5.3	
Private transportation		195.459		205.192	0.1	5.0	
New and used motor vehicles(3).....		98.412		98.698	-1.3	0.3	
New vehicles(1).....		200.318		200.337	-1.1	0.0	
Used cars and trucks(1)		240.164		242.882	1.0	1.1	
Motor fuel		197.888	220.114	239.138	-0.2	20.8	8.6
Gasoline (all types).....		193.075	215.160	234.063	-0.3	21.2	8.8
Gasoline, unleaded regular(4).....		194.253	217.591	236.660	-0.4	21.8	8.8
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade(4)(5).....		211.960	230.341	250.564	1.3	18.2	8.8
Gasoline, unleaded premium(4).....		206.664	221.529	241.397	0.2	16.8	9.0
Motor vehicle insurance(1).....		832.794		856.879	4.0	2.9	
Medical care		441.386		474.391	12.9	7.5	
Recreation		126.507		130.066	6.1	2.8	
Education and communication(3).....		147.269		145.760	1.2	-1.0	
Tuition, other school fees, and child care(1)		1,195.793		1,195.793	3.6	0.0	
Other goods and services		419.797		425.536	2.5	1.4	
Commodity and service group							
Commodities		182.263		186.046	0.6	2.1	
Commodities less food and beverages		145.664		149.965	-0.3	3.0	

Note: See footnotes at end of table.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes and percent changes for selected periods, Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD, (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted) (not seasonally adjusted) - Continued

Expenditure category	Indexes				Percent change from		
	Historical data	Feb. 2019	Mar. 2019	Apr. 2019	Apr. 2018	Feb. 2019	Mar. 2019
Nondurables less food and beverages...		186.575		197.019	-0.9	5.6	
Durables		102.643		102.960	0.3	0.3	
Services.....		324.915		329.936	3.7	1.5	
Special aggregate indexes							
All items less shelter.....		234.552		240.554	2.6	2.6	
All items less medical care		245.141		248.037	1.7	1.2	
Commodities less food		149.301		153.593	-0.1	2.9	
Nondurables		221.554		228.051	0.8	2.9	
Nondurables less food.....		190.983		201.016	-0.5	5.3	
Services less rent of shelter(2).....		357.008		367.970	4.9	3.1	
Services less medical care services.....		313.792		316.031	2.5	0.7	
Energy(1).....		205.564	216.579	227.395	-0.2	10.6	5.0
All items less energy		260.019		262.734	2.9	1.0	
All items less food and energy		259.613		262.547	2.9	1.1	

Footnotes

- (1) Indexes on a March 1978=100 base.
- (2) Indexes on a November 1982=100 base.
- (3) Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.
- (4) Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.
- (5) Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.